to his brother on 11.05.2004 that is on the very day of receipt of the article.

(ii) One Shri Vikash Kumar Nirala preferred a complaint on 28.05.2004 that Chennai Speed Post Letter No. 419507360 dated 06.05.2004 was delivered to him on 17.05.2004. On enquiry it was found that the speed post article under reference was delivered to his brother on 12.05.2004 *i.e.* on the very day of receipt of the article.

Prompt delivery of postcards and envelopes

2430. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that ordinary postcards and envelopes are not delivered in a reasonable time to the concerned persons in the Districts of U.P. especially in Allahabad; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what steps Government propose to take for prompt delivery of the postcards and envelopes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) There is no complaint of non-delivery or delayed delivery in ordinary postcards and envelopes from any district of UP. especially in Allahabad.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above. However, monitoring of delivery function through supervisors, Live Mail Surveys, Test Letters etc. is a continuous activity.

Telephone facilities in villages

†2431. SHRI BALAWANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in the country where telephone facility has been provided during the last three years and till date;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) total number of villages which are still out of reach of this facility;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any phased time bound to provide the telephone connections of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in the said villages; and

(u) if so, the total funds made available or the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) 1,24,215 villages in the country have been provided with telephone facility during the last three years (2001-2002 to 2003-2004). As on 30-06-2004, 5,21,998 villages have access to telephone facility.

(b) Out of the total of 6,07,491 revenue villages in the country, 85,493 villages are yet to be provided with telephone facility.

(c) USO Fund Administrator has initiated action, by way of floating a tender for Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in eligible uncovered revenue villages. It has also signed agreements for the replacement of 1,84,497 VPTs on Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) technology.

BSNL has planned to provide 8,061 villages with telecom facilities during the current financial year. Additionally, it has also planned to provide telecom facility by Satellite media in 16,740 remote and isolated villages which cannot be covered by any terrestrial technology.

(d) For the year 2004-05, USO Fund Administrator has been given a budget provision of Rs. 200 crore, BSNL expects to spend Rs.300 crores.for VPTs on satellite media during the current financial year.

Telephone fault in Andhra Pradesh

2432. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) number or telepnones, the fault of which could not be repaired for more than seven days, in Andhra Pradesh and areas falling under Hyderabad District Telecom during the years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04, even in the midst of lodging complaints by the customers;